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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cornell Graduate Students Receive Awards at Geneva Experiment Station

By Joe Ogrodnick

GENEVA, NY: Two Cornell University graduate students recently received departmental awards at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. Nicole Russo, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Plant Pathology, received the 2006 Robert M. Gilmer award, and Rebecca Loughner, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Entomology, was named the 2006 Michael Villani award recipient.

"Having been a close friend and colleague of Bob Gilmer, and Nicole Russo's advisor, it was a great pleasure for me to be able to present the 2006 Robert M. Gilmer Award to her," said Herb Aldwinckle, professor of plant pathology.

Aldwinckle pointed out that Russo has excelled in her comprehensive coursework and has an outstanding academic record at Cornell. According to Aldwinckle, Russo has tackled her research problem—one that is of concern to the U.S. nursery industry—on the nature of resistance of the B.9 apple rootstock to fire blight with zest, skill, and imagination, and a lot of hard work in the lab, the greenhouse, and the field.

The Gilmer Award is named for Robert M. Gilmer, a faculty member in the Department of Plant Pathology from 1950 to 1975. Gilmer is fondly remembered by colleagues and former students for his intelligence, his breadth of knowledge of plant diseases, and for being a free thinker who challenged conventional views. The total dollar amount of the award is \$5,000.

The 2006 Villani Award was presented to Rebecca Loughner, a student working with Greg English-Loeb, associate professor of entomology. Loughner, who plans to graduate next year, will use some of the \$1,000 stipend to expand her research on the biology and management of the strawberry sap beetle by conducting a trial in a commercial strawberry farm in Lockport, NY. She ultimately hopes to develop a commercially viable method of controlling the insect pest.

"Rebecca has been an ideal graduate student and a worthy choice for this year's Villani Award," said English-Loeb, who further described Loughner as having a sharp and inquisitive mind, great work ethic, exceptional organizational skills, and an ability to work collaboratively with other researchers.

The Villani Award is a stipend given annually to a graduate student in the Department of Entomology and is named in honor of Michael G. Villani who died in 2001. Villani was recognized internationally for his research/extension efforts in soil ecology and established the award to provide funds to help graduate students with their research efforts.

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Pictures are linked to hi-res scans



Herb Aldwinckle (left) and guest speaker Chris Kearney (right) present Nicole Russo with 2006 Gilmer Award Certificate.



Left to Right) Charley Linn, Tom Burr, Rebecca Loughner and Greg English-Loeb on the occasion of the 2006 Villani Award.

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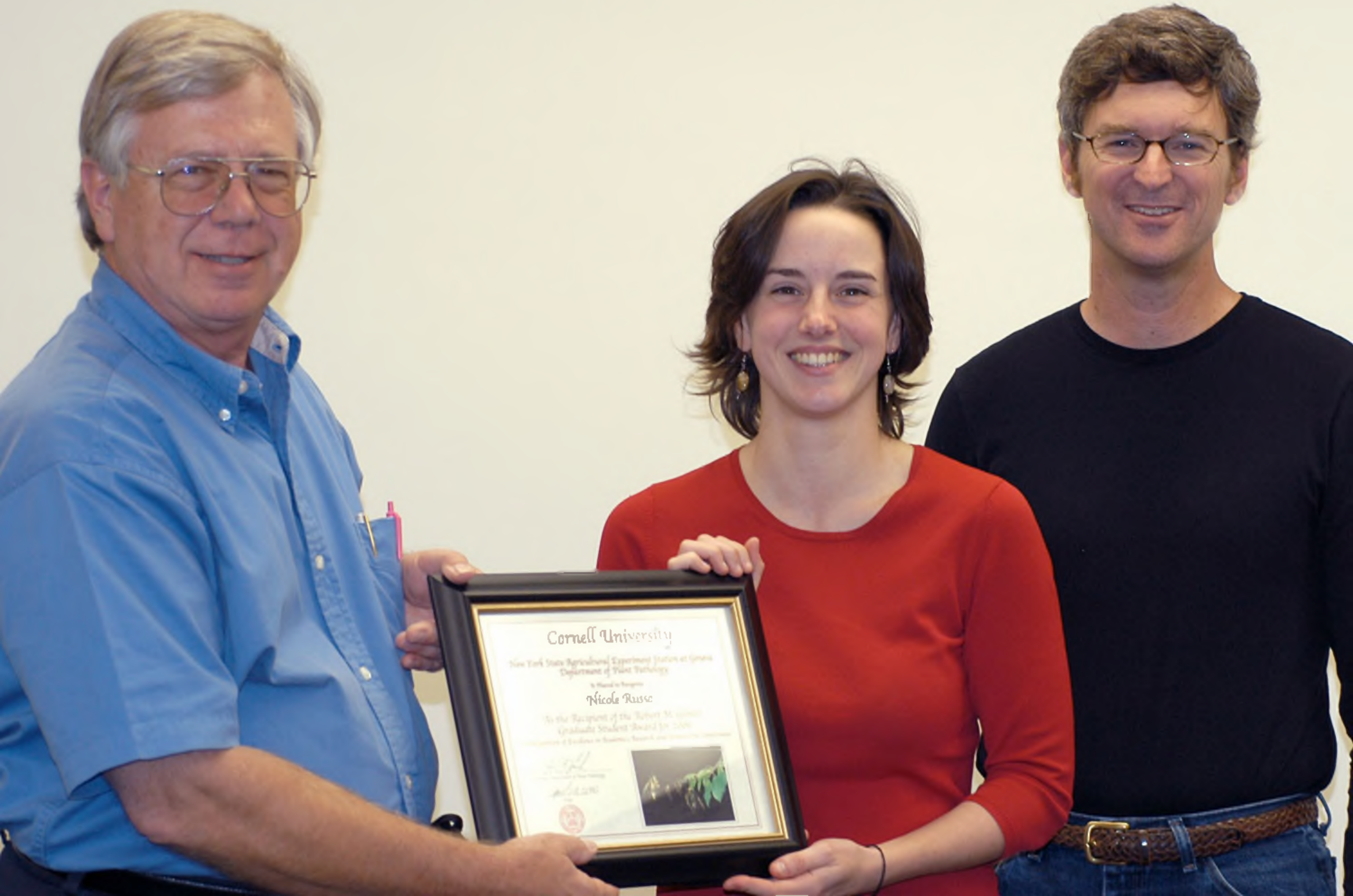
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MICHAEL G. VILLANI
GRADUATE STUDENT
RESEARCH AWARD
PRESENTED BY
REBECCA LOUGHNER
MAY 2006
For the ongoing research conducted by Villani
and Villani in the Department of Agricultural
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